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**Summary of the Garden City Town Hall Meeting held December 6, 2006**

KHPA staff and Board members hosted a Town Hall meeting in Garden City on Wednesday, December 6, 2006, from 4:00 to 6:00. The KHPA Board and staff attending were: Board Secretary Susan Page, Dr. Andrew Allison, Scott Brunner, Megan Ingmire, Luke Thompson, and Marlene Shellenberger. There were local media representatives who attended from the Garden City Telegram, KIUL Radio, and KGNO Radio (Dodge City); although Representative Ward Loyd was scheduled to present testimony, due to unforeseen circumstances he was not able to attend the meeting. Approximately 30 people attended, with five individuals presenting testimony representing providers of senior services, mental health services, pharmacy services, and the local health services. Among the concerns raised were: access to mental health services, transportation issues, shortage of providers (especially mental health, dental and home health), impact of the Presumptive Medical Disability Determination process for MediKan consumers, availability and access to additional community based services for the elderly, Medicaid disproportionate share to hospital (DSH) reimbursement, services to the aging population, and the impact of the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA) on pharmacists. Copies of the testimony presented have been posted to the KHPA website at [www.khpa.ks.gov](http://www.khpa.ks.gov). A brief summary of the testimony presented by each individual is outlined below:

1. Dave Geist, Executive Director, SouthWest Kansas Area Agency on Aging. Expressed overall concerns with access to health services for the senior population in the areas of overall medical care, mental health services, oral health care, preventive care and disease management services. He advised that additional specific concerns in the rural southwest part of the state were: 1) the critical shortage of physicians who will accept Medicaid patients, especially in Seward County; 2) rural area physicians unwilling to accept supplemental plans under the Medicare Advantage Plans which result in the seniors not having coverage for Medicare Part B services; 3) additional critical shortage of home health agencies in the southwest area of the state which has ultimately impacted the seniors' choice of care.
2. Ric Dalke, Executive Director, Area Mental Health Center, representing the Ass'n of Community Mental Health Centers (ACMHC). Provided a brief background of the Area Mental Health Center in Garden City, serving 21 rural and frontier counties in southwest Kansas, and spoke to the challenges of providing behavioral health services in a rural setting. Is very supportive of the development and membership of the KHPA Advisory Councils and would like to ensure that representatives of the mental health services, both a provider and a consumer of mental health services, be given the opportunity to serve. Expressed specific concerns with: 1) the Presumptive Medical Disability Determination program for the mentally ill who are currently receiving services through the MediKan program; 2) impact of the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA) for the Medicaid population; 3) the needs of the underinsured; 4) the fragmented delivery of mental health services due to, in part, the separation of the program oversight and the funding among two different state agencies; 5) the possible transfer of additional Medicaid funded programs from SRS to KHPA. Clearly expressed that the Ass'n of CMHC does not support the transfer of additional programs at this time.
3. James Coast, RPh, Pharmacist in Cimarron, Dodge City and Minneola. Concerned with the ramifications of the Deficit Reduction Act (DFA) implemented in July 2006, specifically with the use of Average Manufacturer Price (AMP) as a cost basis for generic medications under the Medicaid program. Specific concerns with this new pricing policy are: 1) retail pharmacists may be forced to increase dispensing fees; 2) the decreased reimbursement on generic drugs with this new policy creates a disincentive to prescribe generic drugs; 3) pharmacists may choose to no longer participate in the Medicaid program which will exacerbate the issue of the lack of pharmacists in the western part of the state. Closed by encouraging KHPA to continue its efforts around pricing transparency.
4. Kristi Schmitt, Finney Co. Health Dept. (no written testimony available). Spoke briefly of the importance of the local health department services as a public safety net for those uninsured and underinsured. Local health department staff serve a large number of consumers daily, with health needs ranging from providing immunizations to providing more complex services. Challenges faced by the local health departments in the

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western rural areas are: language barriers by consumers, transportation issues, accessibility and affordability of services.

5. Elaine Ptacek, representing the Mental Health Credentialing Coalition. Would encourage KHPA to oversee the policy-making decisions for both physical and mental health services, rather than having the oversight managed by separate agencies. For many consumers, a need for a specific medical health service is a result of a mental health need; with the policy oversight in both program areas in one entity, the delivery system would become more effective. Also spoke to the importance of a multi-disciplinary approach to providing mental health services, using the professional services of psychologists, counselors, therapists and social workers. Recommended that current legislation that governs the licensure of these professionals be revised to allow equity among the professionals in diagnosing and treating mental disorders, which would result in increased access and consumer choice for mental health services.

#### Questions and Answers:

1. Jim Karlin, Southwest Guidance Center, Liberal KS – Commented on the critical shortage of dental providers; stated that the need for dental care for consumers, especially those with mental health needs, is increasing and that hopefully KHPA is working on ways to address this provider shortage. Also concerned that there are no physicians in Seward County who are receiving Medicaid patients. Dr. Allison responded that KHPA FY 2008 budget request included an expansion of the Medicaid coverage for dental services for adults; if approved, then dental care would be extended to the adult Medicaid population group. He added that KHPA is well-aware of the shortage of providers, especially dental providers; that this shortage has been a concern for policy-makers, stakeholders and consumers for quite some time; and that work is continuing to find ways to address this concern.
2. Sam Lane, Sunflower Home Health, Garden City – Concerned with the lack of uniformity among case management services/managers. Dr. Allison responded that staff are currently reviewing the Targeted Case Management (TCM) program in order to allow for more uniformed approach while taking into consideration the requirements from the federal government. Scott Brunner added that the issue of flexibility to use TCM services (and the need for prioritization of TCM related services), was included in the recent DRA legislation.
3. Sheldon Carpenter, Iroquois Center for Human Development, Greensburg KS; Jim Karlin, Southwest Guidance Center, Liberal KS; Sister Janice Thome, USD 457 Parents as Teachers; - Reimbursement of transportation expenses is a critical need for providers in rural Kansas; consideration must be given to provide a different reimbursement rate for providers in rural counties compared with urban counties due to “windshield time”. Dr. Allison responded that KHPA is aware of the transportation issue for providers and staff are continuing their work on looking at creative solutions to address the access issues in rural Kansas. Scott Brunner added that the use of telemedicine in Kansas is higher than a number of other states and that, for some Kansas providers, using telemedicine is a way to provide health services without incurring the transportation costs.
4. Troy Horton, Center for Independent Living, Garden City KS – Stated that a disproportionate share of Medicaid dollars is going to institutional care/nursing facilities rather than home and community based services (HCBS). Services for a disabled or elderly consumer which are provided in the community setting can be done far cheaper and promotes consumer choice. Asked what steps are being taken to address this. Dr. Allison responded that KHPA has heard this same concern at a number of public meetings recently and that whenever possible a consumer should have the option of receiving care in his/her home.
5. Stacy Ritt, Center for Independent Living, Garden City KS – Shared concerns with the reimbursement rate and coverage of self-directed care (community support). Scott Brunner responded that KHPA is currently working with SRS and other state agencies on these issues with the self-directed rates. Dr. Allison added that there may be improvements in this area with the recent approval of the “Money Follows the Person” grant submitted by SRS in coordination with KHPA staff. Ms. Ritt also expressed concern about the shortage of rehabilitative therapists and facilities in the area.
6. Jim Karlin, Southwest Guidance Center, Liberal KS – Concerned with the shortage of mental health facilities in western Kansas and the impact on the facilities for the elderly; and he cited a recent transfer of a large number of patients from a mental health nursing facility into a geriatric home. Scott Brunner responded that there is clarification needed regarding the role of the nursing facilities for mental health (NF/MH). Is it needed for long-term care? Or is it needed for the stabilization of a patient in a mental health crisis? He added that, with the creation of the KHPA, there is now an avenue where more joint discussions between KHPA, SRS and Aging can be held around these issues.
7. Ric Dalke, Area Mental Health Center, Garden City – Commented on the collaboration skills among providers in the western part of Kansas and how, mainly due to the nature of rural Kansas, providers are willing to work together to resolve problems. However there are critical concerns in rural Kansas in the areas of: shortage of child psychiatrists; shortage of dental providers; and shortage of substance abuse resources. Dr. Allison agreed that the shortage of providers is indeed a concern and that it will take a comprehensive strategy to resolve these issues.
8. Sister Janice Thome, USD 457 Parents as Teachers – Commented on the language barrier among providers and consumers, the increasing need for interpretative services, and the impact this has had on providing basic health services to families and children. Dr. Allison responded that the language barrier is an area where additional efforts will be needed in the enrollment/application process, to allow all consumers the same opportunities to apply

for services. He also explained KHPA's concern with the implications of the new citizenship and identity verification requirements, implemented July 2006 with the passage of DRA; and stated the KHPA staff are closely monitoring the enrollment process to measure the impact these new requirements has had on consumers. KHPA has contacted the congressional delegation about our concerns and the Executive Director will be meeting with the delegation in February 2007 to discuss policy alternatives.